

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are currently pending in the present application. Claims 1, 7 and 13 have been amended and claims 2-5, 8-11, and 14-17 cancelled. Thus, claims 1, 6, 7, 12, 13, and 18 are pending in the present application.

Claims 1-18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over www.DealTime.com and the Circuit City web site. This rejection is respectfully traversed and reconsideration thereof is requested.

Applicant's claimed system is directed to a large plurality of stores and distributors in an independent supply chain management system designed for managing the ordering of inventory, equipment and other items. Because of the large number of stores and distributors involved, and because of the fact that these stores and distributors are primarily independent of and not controlled by the independent supply chain management system, and thus that these stores and distributors make business decisions without consulting the supply chain management system, information relating to the alignment of a given store with a given distributor may have changed since the store's initial registration with the independent supply chain management system. However, the independent supply chain management system would like to be able to initiate orders for a given set of stores for additional inventory based on incoming sales data without the need to contact each store and request an updated registration with an updated distributor listing for that store. The way that this is accomplished automatically in the present invention is by taking documents that would normally flow to the supply chain management system such as data relating to the sale of goods including invoices from the distributors relating to inventory provided to the store that relating to the goods that were sold, and using those documents which are a natural byproduct of the business, to update the store-distributor alignment in the registration information. The independent claims 1, 7, and 13 have been amended to clarify this aspect of the invention.

First, the claims have been amended to clarify that the claim relates to "an independent supply chain management system," to thereby focus on the fact that the store-distributor alignment changes are not normally available to the independent

supply chain management system, other then through a query and response, because the system does not control the stores or the distributors.

The registering step has been clarified to be with the independent supply chain management system. It has further been clarified that the registration includes "a store identification and at least one distributor associated with the store."

Additionally, the collecting data with second identification information has been amended to also clarify that the second identification information includes "a store identification and at least one distributor associated with the store." The phrase "data relating to the sale of goods by the stores" is intended to be interpreted broadly as any of a variety of different business forms and invoices connected to the movement of inventory to or from the store due to the sale of goods by the store that also includes a store identification and at least one distributor associated with the store. In order to emphasize that the salient feature is that the business document list the store identification and a distributor associated with the store, that language has now been added.

Additionally, the focus on comparing the first identification with the second identification information has been clarified to be the independent supply chain management system comparing the store identification and at least one distributor in the first information to the store identification and at least one distributor in the second information.

Additionally, the updating step has been amended to clarify that the distributor in the registration of the respective stores is what is being updated.

Overall, the present invention is directed to an environment where store-distributor alignments are unstable/dynamic in the context of a large supply chain where the stores and distributors are independent and not under the control of the independent supply chain management system.

Referring now to the www.DealTime.com reference, there is disclosed a search engine that allows a consumer to designate a product and aspects of a product such as price, and to search not only across merchant sites, but also across online classifieds,

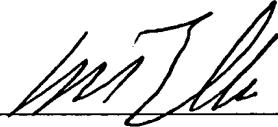
person-to-person auctions and large auction sites. Dealtime does not relate to managing a supply chain including stores and distributors. Dealtime does not have a registration process for stores. Dealtime does not maintain a database with store identification and a listing of an associated distributor. Dealtime does not collect data from a plurality of stores relating to the sale of goods by the given store and that includes at least one distributor associated with the store. As the examiner notes, Dealtime does not compare the store identification and at least one distributor in the first identification information with the store identification and at least one distributor in the second information. Finally, Dealtime does not update the registration of respective stores based on the comparison.

Referring to the Circuit City web site, there is disclosed a web site that allows a search for a nearest store and provides an online product ordering system. The Circuit city web site does not relate to managing a supply chain including stores and distributors. The Circuit City web site does not have a registration process for stores. The Circuit City web site does not maintain a database with store identification and a listing of an associated distributor. The Circuit City web site does not collect data from a plurality of stores relating to the sale of goods by the given store and that includes at least one distributor associated with the store. The Circuit City web site does not compare the store identification and the at least one distributor in the first identification information with the store identification and the at least one distributor in the second information. Finally, the Circuit City web site does not update the registration of respective stores based on the comparison. In essence, the Circuit City web site merely is an in-house ordering system for a series of stores owned by the Circuit City company. There is no need to learn about store-distributor alignment because the owning entity Circuit City controls changes to the alignment information. Thus, there is no registration of the stores disclosed, much less a registration that includes distributor information, and there would be no need to update that distributor information over time, because the Circuit City stores, from the information disclosed, cannot make independent business decisions that would allow them to choose a new distributor. Accordingly, there is no disclosure of receiving data relating to the sale of goods by the store that includes a current distributor. Thus, the withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Claims 7 and 12 describe and claim the invention in a system context. Likewise, claims 13 and 18 claim the invention in a computer program product context. These claims are not disclosed or suggested by the www.DealTime.com or Circuit City reference for the reasons stated previously. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of these claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing remarks, the application is considered to be in a condition for allowance. Early passage to issue of the application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Mark d-Up Claims:

1. (Amended) A method for updating information in [a] an independent supply chain management [framework] system that cannot mandate store-distributor relationships in the supply chain, comprising:

a) registering a plurality of stores of a supply chain to a database of the supply chain management system [framework] utilizing a network, the registration including receiving first identification information including a store identification and a distributor associated with the store;

b) collecting data from a plurality of stores of the supply chain utilizing the network, the data relating to the sale of goods by the stores and including second identification information including a store identification and a distributor associated with the store, the second identification information being more recent than the first identification information;

c) allowing access to the data utilizing a network-based interface;

d) the independent supply chain management system comparing the store identification and the distributor in the first identification information with the store identification and the distributor in the second identification information; and

e) the independent supply chain management system updating the distributor in the registration of [the] respective stores based on the comparison.

7. (Amended) A system for updating information in [a] an independent supply chain management [framework] system that cannot mandate store-distributor relationships in the supply chain, comprising:

a) logic for registering a plurality of stores of a supply chain to a database of the supply chain management system utilizing a network, the registration including receiving first identification information including a store identification and a distributor associated with the store;

b) logic for collecting data from a plurality of stores of the supply chain utilizing the network, the data relating to the sale of goods by the stores and including second identification information including a store identification and a distributor

associated with the store, the second identification information being more recent than the first identification information;

- c) logic for allowing access to the data utilizing a network-based interface;
- d) logic for the independent supply chain management system comparing the store identification and the distributor in the first identification information with the store identification and the distributor in the second identification information; and
- e) logic for the independent supply chain management system updating the distributor in the registration of [the] respective stores based on the comparison.

13. (Amended) A computer program product for updating information in [a]-an independent supply chain management [framework] system that cannot mandate store-distributor relationships in the supply, comprising:

- a) computer code for registering a plurality of stores of a supply chain to a database of the supply chain management system utilizing a network, the registration including receiving first identification information including a store identification and a distributor associated with the store;
- b) computer code for collecting data from a plurality of stores of the supply chain utilizing the network, the data relating to the sale of goods by the stores and including second identification information including a store identification and a distributor associated with the store, the second identification information being more recent than the first identification information;
- c) computer code for allowing access to the data utilizing a network-based interface;
- d) computer code for the independent supply chain management system comparing the store identification and the distributor in the first identification information with the store identification and the distributor in the second identification information; and
- e) computer code for the independent supply chain management system updating the distributor in the registration of [the] respective stores based on the comparison.